

**CIVIL SOCIETY
DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2011-2014**

Tallinn 2011

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Introduction

Civil society is understood to be a society where people's basic rights and freedoms are protected and where they can carry out own initiative based cooperation to represent their interests and to influence political decisions through citizens' associations and networks. Citizens' associations, which are the second most important target group of the development plan besides the public authorities, are uniformly understood to be non-governmental non-profit organisations, whereas the use of the term is based on the applicable literary standard. Non-profit association is an equivalent term to citizens' association. For more definitions of the terms used in the Development Plan, please see Chapter 9.

A strong and democratic civil society keeps its members socially active so that the members and their associations and the public authorities could work together towards the basic values established in the Constitution of the Republic of Estonia. These basic values are liberty, justice and law, internal and external peace, social progress and welfare and the preservation of the Estonian nation and culture.

Above all, this Development Plan addresses the role of civic initiative carried out in public interests in the entire civil society and establishes strategic objectives for 2014 as well as measures for public authorities to create favourable conditions for the development of the civil society and for supporting civic initiative. The role of public authorities in facilitating the development of civil society first of all lies in shaping the legal environment and the decisions regulating or influencing activities based on civic initiative as well as in establishing practices that the representative of public authority use in communicating with citizens and their associations. The latter requires awareness, an attitude supportive of civic initiative and skills of involvement, financing, public services delegation and supervision. Indeed, the development plan contains measures for both directions: the ones shaping the associations' activity environment and operational capability as well as the ones introducing the best practices.

The Civil Society Development Plan is an area-specific development plan, the coordination and implementation of which is the responsibility of the Minister of Regional Affairs and which is implemented both by government agencies and local level institutions and citizens' associations. The Development Plan has been prepared in order to ensure that all these parties have a uniform understanding of the objectives and activity directions of the civil society. The Development Plan also establishes links to bordering areas, like the involvement of the Russian-speaking population in social life, but avoids duplicating activities – for instance, the measures contained in the Integration Plan are not repeated in this Development Plan.

The Development Plan comprises five topics: civil education, the operational capability and sustainability of citizens' associations, the partnership of citizens' associations and public authorities in providing public services, involvement, and charity and philanthropy, which are all strongly intertwined. Thus, civil education develops people's values and skills, including, for instance, the wish to work as volunteers or to participate in the activities of citizens' associations, in order to be more effectively included and have a say in deciding common issues. Citizens' associations, on the other hand, contribute to solving social problems, for instance, by providing

public services. In turn, support structures are needed to ensure that citizens are active participants in social life and citizens' associations are able to fulfil their role.

The principles of the Development Plan are aimed at the whole civil society, but more specific target groups are defined by objectives. The current situation in the development of civil society as well as the main problems and proposals for overcoming the problems are addressed under every topic, and in order to link the Development Plan and its implementation plan, references to the latter have been provided. The implementation plan complements the objectives and measures of the Development Plan, providing a plan of activity, resources and responsible parties.

Links to European Union and Estonia's strategic documents and other national development plans

The Development Plan has been prepared in consideration of the overall trends in the development of civil society in Estonia and Europe and strategic documents addressing the development of the area so far. On the European Union level, there are no directly applicable or binding legal acts regulating the civil society. The Development Plan follows the principles provided in the European Commission's White Paper: European Governance and the proposals presented in that document¹. The Development Plan also takes into account the proposals presented in European Commission's discussion document European Commission and Non-governmental Organisations: Building a Stronger Partnership². The national strategy documents taken into account in the preparation of the Development Plan include the [Estonian Civil Society Development Concept](#), the [Government Programme for 2007-2011](#) and the [National Strategic Reference Framework 2007–2013](#). In addition, the Development Plan is linked to several area-specific development plans currently being developed or already implemented. An overview of important strategic documents is provided in Chapter 10.

Impact indicators of the Development Plan

The implementation of the Development Plan is expected to increase the level of participation of citizens in social life, improve the operational capability of citizens' associations and increase the efficiency of cooperation between the third sector and the public sector. The impact indicators of the Development Plan are as follows:

- 1) Level of participation of citizens in social life** (civil education; operational capability of citizens' associations; involvement; charity and philanthropy).

Base level 2010	Target level 2014	Source	Responsible agency

¹ White Paper: European Governance COM(2001) 428 http://ec.europa.eu/governance/white_paper/en.pdf
² http://ec.europa.eu/civil_society/ngo/docs/communication_en.pdf

1. Proportion of volunteers in population 27%	35%	1. Centre of Registers and Information Systems,	MoI
2. Rate of non-institutional social-political participation of population (5%)	7%	Business Support and Credit Management Foundation	MoI
3. Understanding of (26%) and interest in (45%) politics	35% and 45%	2. European Social Survey and Survey: Institutionalisation of Civic Initiative in Estonia European Social Survey 3. European Social Survey	MoI

2) Operational capability of citizens' associations (operational capability of citizens' associations; charity and philanthropy)

Base level 2010	Target level 2014	Source	Responsible agency
1. Proportion of non-profit associations with paid employees (32%)	40%	1. Estonian Tax and Customs Board	MoI
2. Proportion of citizens' association with experience of involving regular volunteers of citizens' associations engaging volunteers (60%)	70%	2. Survey: Institutionalisation of Civic Initiative in Estonia	MoI

3) Public and third sector cooperation and diversity of forms of cooperation (charity and philanthropy; citizens' associations as partners in providing public services; involvement; charity and philanthropy)

Base level 2010	Target level 2014	Source	Responsible agency
1. Satisfaction with the organisation of involvement on ministry level (satisfaction of officials 2.18 and satisfaction of partners 2.11 (on a scale of 5, where 1 in the highest)	1.5 and 1.5	1. Analysis of involvement practices of government agencies	State Chancellery
2. Ministries follow the good practices of involvement (74 %)	85%	2. Analysis of involvement practices of government agencies	MoI
3. Proportion of local governments that have delegated public services to citizens' associations 60%	70%	3. Contractual delegation of public services of local government units to citizens' associations	MoI
4. Cooperation experience of public authorities and citizens' associations: 24% of local governments, 31% of county governments and 17% of ministry officials cooperate with citizens' associations.	40% 30% 20%	4. Survey: Institutionalisation of Civic Initiative	

Through the implementation of the Development Plan, public authorities will create favourable conditions for the development of civil society, with the aim of:

- increasing the efficiency of public sector cooperation in the development of civil society and ensuring the governmental sector's uniform approach to supporting civic initiative and civil society;
- contributing to the promotion of participatory democracy and embedding the values and role of civil society;
- strengthening the operational capability of citizens' associations and supporting the growth of the socio-economic role of citizens' associations;
- strengthening the partnership of citizens' associations and the public sector;
- valuing and promoting volunteer activities and charity.

Cross-sectoral development activities

The coordination and implementation of the topics of the Civil Society Development Plan (civil education, operational capability and sustainability of citizens' associations, partnership of citizens' associations and public authorities in providing public services, involvement, and charity and philanthropy) requires cross-sectoral development activities, which are understood to be cross-topical supportive activities in order to ensure that the topics of the Development Plan are balanced and interlinked.

Legal regulation. Analysis of the impact of the legal environment on the development of civil society and uniform agreement of the terms *citizens' association acting in public interests* and *charitable*, the creation of a legal definition of volunteer activities and legal clarity in citizens' associations earning a revenue through economic activities.

Awareness-raising activities. Introduction of the area of civil society and the creation of clarity of roles. Awareness-raising ensures the up-to-date quality and availability of information, including the mutual interfacing of individual information portals. The objective of the awareness-raising plan is to plan the awareness-raising activities related to the implementation of the Civil Society Development Plan.

Training. Seminars for local governments on the following topics: the role, importance and cooperation possibilities of civil society, including the involvement of citizens' associations as partners in the development of local life. This includes ensuring various training events for citizens' associations (new and existing).

Surveys. Repeated surveys ensure the comparability of data, the possibility to describe trends and assess the impact of the Development Plan activities and measures. The following repeated surveys will be carried out in the framework of the Development Plan: Institutionalisation of Civic Initiative in Estonia, Participation in Volunteer Activities in Estonia, NGO Sustainability Index (by the United States Agency for International Development, or USAID), and an analysis report on civil education and volunteer activities shall be prepared on the basis of the European Social Survey data.

1. Civil education

Background and problem description

The aim of civil education is to support the development of caring and considerate communities, and to facilitate the strengthening of civil society and democratic culture. The efficiency of the civil education policy is, among other things, manifested by citizens' activity and participation.

In promoting civil education, the main focus has so far been on social studies in general education schools, where it has now found a firm place in the curriculum and survey results³ give reason to be satisfied – the level of democracy-related knowledge among the school youth has increased. By their attitudes and participation, Estonian teenagers are at the average level in international comparison and the dangerous gap in awareness between Estonian-speaking and Russian-speaking schools observed a decade ago has decreased. Young people are also active as citizens (44% take part in volunteer activities, 30% in organising campaigns etc), and the European Union civil education programme Youth in Action has been launched successfully.

Civil education is also promoted among adults. There are informal education schools, a part of the population participates in the activities of community societies and other associations, where people gain experience of doing things together and deciding things together. In addition, associations contribute to the development of the civil skills and knowledge of their members by providing training. There are important initiatives encouraging active citizenship, like Let's Do It!, awareness-raising campaigns and social actions, which motivate people to think along and act in the interests of the community. But latest surveys still show that the proportion of those who have participated in at least four different types of social activities in the last few years is only 11% of the population of Estonia. The proportion of passive people, who only take part in voting, is the highest (39%). Data from the European Social Survey allows us to consider 9.3% of the population active.⁴

Therefore, the resources invested in civil education have not yet resulted in a significant contribution in strengthening democracy in Estonia. One of the reasons for that is the extensive fragmentation of the area between individual actors and the insufficient targeting of policies; the objectives established under various implementation plans are not cohesive and the links and impact of programmes and initiatives have not been analysed. Considerable responsibility for the implementation of activities is placed on the third sector, whose initiatives are not always sustainable due to project-based financing.

As a policy area, civil education has been addressed in the Activity Plan for the Implementation of the Estonian Civil Society Development Concept⁵, as well as in the organisation of the policy of individual areas. For instance, the facilitation of informal learning for adults in order to develop own initiative and social responsibility is one of the objectives of the Adult Education Development Plan for 2009-2013. One of the priorities of the Youth Work Strategy for 2009-2013 is to increase the participation of young people. For shaping the character and attitudes of pre-school children and

³ Presentation of IEA 2009 civil education survey <http://media.tlu.ee/archive/index.php/Esitlus/IEA+Vaimela>

⁴ European Social Survey <http://ess.nsd.uib.no/> Using the results of 2008 and taking into account the respondents who in the past 12 months have done at least two activities included in the following list: contacting a politician or a government official, worked for the benefit of a party or civic initiative, worked in a citizens' association or society, worn a campaign badge, signed a petition, participated in a picket, boycotted a certain product.

⁵ As a long-term priority, the Civil Society Development Plan places great emphasis on the need to increase the level of civil education and active citizenship and to strengthen participatory democracy.

school youth, the national programme Value Development in the Estonian Society 2009-2013 has been launched. The civil education of ethnic minorities is one of the tasks foreseen in the Estonian Integration Plan. The Civil Society Development Plan does not duplicate other activity plans, but focuses on bottlenecks in the overall organisation of civil education and on supplementing area-specific policies.

The implementation of the Development Plan concentrates on three directions: the creation of a system for coordinating the area, the improvement of the quality and content of civil education, and the involvement of more people in civil education. The main target groups of the measures are the institutions and organisations involved in the organisation of civil education, and the less active part of the population.

The well-advised planning of civil education is of primary importance in order to create the pre-conditions for the development of a more participatory society. As a solution, experts have proposed the joint policy model⁶, which brings together both the public sector and third sector organisations. In the first stage of implementing the said model, a common information field will be created (Measure 1, Activity 2) for the purpose of enhancing communication between the parties and to increase mutual trust between partners as well as their overall capabilities. The second stage is focussed on concentrating expert knowledge and on developing and implementing a policy to create the necessary administrative structure (Measure 1, Activity 3). The model does not foresee the centralisation of all the activities promoting civil education, but rather the better coordination thereof, and the unit responsible for the implementation of the policy may be placed in existing structures – reaching an agreement in regards to the cooperation model, the policy implementation mechanisms and the necessary resources is of paramount importance.

Simultaneously with improving the coordination, we have to ensure that both the education system and the non-formal learning possibilities offer a more practical democracy experience. Civic initiative and entrepreneurship are a carrying theme in national general education curricula, but schools need instruction and counselling. For instance, in how to cooperate with citizens' associations, carry out community projects and volunteer activities for achieving study objectives (Measure 2, Activity 1) or how to implement school democracy in a more efficient manner (Measure 2, Activity 2).

Civil education cannot be limited to graduation from a general education school, but training programmes (incl. professional training and further training) should also support the increase of knowledge and skills needed in the community or in the active participation of discussing matters of national importance (Measure 2, Activity 3). The importance of civil society involvement in the planning and implementation of policies also has to be emphasised in the education and training of public sector employees (Measure 2, Activity 4). Public authorities have the opportunity and task to ensure that initiatives supporting active citizenship organised by citizens' associations – like the shadow elections, pre-election debates, study buses and other initiatives – by also increasing the role of local governments in supporting civil education related initiatives (Measure 2, Activity 5).

People who do not have a positive participating experience or whose social networks do not motivate them to change their passive attitude often do not take part in training events and initiatives. As the workplace constitutes an important communication network for working-age people, a dialogue should be opened with employers to find possibilities for promoting civil education at the workplace (Measure 3, Activity 1). At the community level, the emergence of

⁶ Joint policy model for civil education http://www.siseministeerium.ee/public/KH_yp_mudel_080610.rtf

simpler learning models can be facilitated to increase civil awareness and contribute to the development of discussion culture (Measure 3, Activity 2).

The importance of civil education should be acknowledged more in working with target groups who have a risk of exclusion due to their low capability in communicating with the state, e.g. the elderly, people who do not speak the state language, people with low level of education living in periphery areas (Measure 3, Activity 3). Awareness of possibilities of participating in social life is not sufficient among non-Estonian community groups who need support and encouragement to join networks of citizens' associations and to participate more actively in third sector initiatives (Measure 3, Activity 4).

Objective

Civil education is systematically coordinated and efficiently organised, increasing the active and responsible participation of the population of Estonia in social life.

Explanation

The joint policy model will be applied to ensure systematic coordination of civil education. Firstly, a programme-based approach will allow us to establish priorities, improve the availability of civil education, and ensure the diversity and consistency of initiatives. Secondly, it will also allow us to monitor the impact and efficiency of initiatives. At the same time, attention will be paid to improving the content of civil education and reaching less involved target groups. Importance is placed on the cohesion of formal and non-formal education systems and the development of methods enabling the assimilation of practical experience. Diverse learning models will be implemented to involve various target groups.

Measure 1: Systematic coordination and organisations of the implementation of the national civil education policy

The unit responsible for the development and implementation of the civil education policy will be launched. The first task of the civil education policy implementation unit will be to serve the Democracy Education Advisory Committee, which comprises social scientists, education employees and representatives of local governments, the media and the business and third sectors, and which is responsible for the planning and coordinating of the area and organises regular monitoring. The civil education implementation unit will also have executive power and be ensured with a constant budget for the implementation of the activity programme.

Activities are planned in stages – starting with convening a cooperation network based on partnership between the various parties and creating a common information field. The first step is to create a digital information space, which concentrates information about civil education service providers, programmes and projects, guidelines and study materials, best practices, possibilities of finding funding for civil education related initiatives and research in the area. In the next stage, we will start concentrating on knowledge and experience.

Indicators for assessing the efficiency of the measure:

- the parties' satisfaction with cooperation and the civil education coordination system;
- the fulfilment of the activity plan agreed for promoting civil education;

Measure 2: Improving the awareness of the population of Estonia of the functioning of democratic society, the importance and possibilities of participation, and the rights and responsibilities as citizens

The focus here is on improving the content of civil education, creating cohesion between learning models and increasing the importance of practical experience based learning. With the implementation of a new curriculum in the formal education system, the introduction of active learning methods and the development of participatory school culture will be encouraged and motivated in general education schools.

In cooperation with training institutions, recommendations for increasing the share of civil education related components in professional studies and further training programmes, encouraging, above all, a more active introduction of methods based on practical tasks in improving the students' civil skills. The aim is to develop the following skills in students: considering the opinions of others, negotiation skills, ability to assume responsibility, involving others in decision-making etc.

Activities to increase the awareness of specialists working in various sectors of the essence of the functioning of a democratic society and the interaction of the parties will include joint training events for employees and job experience days for students and cooperation to offer more diverse practice opportunities to young specialists. Local governments will also be motivated to support community-based civil education initiatives. The partnerships and discussions created in the course of planning and implementing activities will give a new impetus to increasing the value of civil education in the society.

Indicators for assessing the efficiency of the measure:

- school democracy has become a natural part of school culture;
- level of knowledge of civil rights among the adult population;
- awareness of the population of politics and political decisions.

Measure 3: Purposeful involvement of less active social groups in civil education initiatives

In order to increase the level of active citizenship, people with less experience in participating need to be encouraged, so as to make them feel comfortable in a democratic environment and able and willing to have a say in the matters concerning the society. In the implementation of the Development Plan, emphasis will be placed on making civil education opportunities accessible to those target groups that have, for various reasons, not been included in regular training activities or initiatives.

At the community level, the creation of civil education study groups will be motivated and encouraged, to facilitate mutual cooperation among the residents of a neighbourhood in sharing the knowledge and skills essential for coping in a democratic society. Training and counselling will be provided to social welfare specialists in order to increase the use of civil education opportunities in preventing social exclusion and improving the coping abilities of individuals and families.

In cooperation with employers, possibilities to improve the civic competencies of working-age population at the workplace, motivating the implementation of participatory learning based initiatives in work collectives. In order to increase the participatory skills and experience of ethnic minority communities, non-Estonian community groups will be encouraged to more actively participate in the area-specific initiatives and networks of the third sector.

Indicators for assessing the efficiency of the measure:

- the share of population involved in civil education training activities and initiatives.

2. Operational capability and sustainability of citizens' associations

Background and problem description

Legal environment

The operational capability of citizens' associations is largely based on the legal environment, which either facilitates or impairs the civil society development trends. The laws regulating non-profit associations and foundations create a good basis for the establishment and operations of associations, while uniform bases of taxation and accounting requirements provide a framework for economic activities and the disclosed annual reports make the third sector more transparent.

For a number of years, the survey conducted by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has also included an assessment of the sustainability of Estonian citizens' associations in various topical areas. In 2009, the legal environment received the second best grade⁷ (1.7), but in practice several development directions need legal analysis and regulation: citizens' associations increasingly engage in economic activities in order to earn self-generated income, provide public and community services, launch social companies etc (Measure 1, Activity 1).

Citizens' associations operate as non-profit associations and foundations in very diverse areas, from hobby activities to commercial purposes, from religious organisations and village societies to trade unions and political parties, professional associations, unions of enterprises and local governments, associations acting solely in the interests of their members and associations established by government agencies or local governments. This diversity makes gathering and analysing data about the third sector difficult. The classification of Estonian economic activities (EMTAK), which is the basis for gathering and processing statistical data, also needs analysis and specification, and in order to do that and to better organise the register, the Ministry of Justice has planned activities in accordance with the procedure stipulated in § 36¹ of the Non-profit Associations Act (Measure 1, Activity 4).

No distinction of entities acting in public interests is made in the register and in statistical data or in the List of Non-profit Associations and Foundations Benefiting from Income Tax Incentives established by Government of the Republic Order No 94 of 8 February 2000, where the narrowly interpreted definition of charitable activities applies as an additional requirement. Entries into the list are not made consistently and it contains organisations, which by legal criteria should not be included in the list. The role of income tax incentives needs to be analysed and the list organised in a clearer manner (Measure 1, Activity 2).

Since 2010, non-profit associations also submit their annual reports electronically to the register of non-profit associations and foundations, which creates possibilities for electronic processing and analysing of the basic data of associations (number of members, turnover, self-generated income, funding received from various financing entities etc). The organisation of the register on the basis of the submitted electronic annual reports will be launched (Measure 1, Activity 3).

⁷ (on a scale of 1 to 7, where 7 is the poorest grade) NGO Sustainability Index, USAID, 2009, www.ngo.ee/indeks

Publicly funded support structure services for citizens' associations

Citizens' associations need consistent support services funded from the state budget: counselling, possibilities to receive training and consultation, various mentoring and development programmes, information about developments in the third sector and their area, access to research and analyses, events to discuss common issues etc.

Such services are provided by approximately twenty consultants working at the county development centres coordinated by Enterprise Estonia. Similar support services are also provided by the Network of Estonian Non-profit Organisations (weekly e-letter, journal Good Citizen, conferences, spring and summer schools etc) and the Centre for Volunteer Activities (training and consultation related to volunteer activities, development activities). Certain support activities necessary for associations are organised by the National Foundation of Civil Society and counselling is provided to villages by the Estonian Village Movement *Kodukant* through its network of coordinators and consultants as well as by various area-specific umbrella organisations of associations.

According to the USAID Sustainability Index, the services provided by support structures are ranked at the highest level in Estonia – 1.6 (on a scale of 1 to 7, where 7 is the poorest grade). Support services have been developed and implemented, but both overlapping and extensive fragmentation of activities occurs. The provision of services has to be better coordinated, with the aim to achieve a high stable quality of the services, to avoid overlapping and to cease inefficient activities. In addition, work is done to develop the quality of the training and development programmes intended for managers of citizens' associations and to coordinate the financing of these programmes, as managers increasingly need an individual approach and possibilities to participate in training through national training support similar to the one provided to companies (Measure 2, Activities 1, 2).

The qualification of the counsellors of county development centres needs to be harmonised. The information system of county development centres (MAKIS) will be launched at the beginning of 2011. Portals offering similarly orientated support services (information, guidelines, sample forms, e-counselling etc) – like MAKIS and www.ngo.ee need cohesion and coordination both in the interests of better availability and the more efficient use of resources (Measure 2, Activities 3, 4).

Improving the organisation of funding of citizens' associations from state and local government budgets

Besides self-generated income (including membership fees) and private sector support, public funding is one of the three sources for income for citizens' associations. Comparison with developed countries with a strong third sector shows that, on the average, public funding forms nearly a half (48%) of the income of citizens' associations and is the most important source of income (self-generated income 45% and private sector support 7%).⁸ Estonia has not gathered the relevant statistical data, but it has been assessed in various studies. In 2009, non-profit associations listed their main sources of financing as follows: income from membership fees (63% of associations), support from local governments (51%) and from national funds (31%). There is less

⁸ Salamon, Sokolowski, List "Global Civil Society, vol. 2: Dimensions of the Non-profit Sector" (2004), p. 30 etc.

mention of income from economic activities (28%), support from the state budget (22%) and from Estonian enterprises (17%).⁹

In 2009, the USAID Index ranking for the financial sustainability alongside the organisational sustainability and the provision of public services was the lowest – 2.4. This backlog requires activities to be planned to strengthen the operational capability and sustainability of citizens' associations. Surveys of funding practices of citizens' associations, including the Report on the Analysis of the State Budget Funding of Citizens' Associations 2006-2007¹⁰ and the Preparation of Model of Principles for the Allocation and Use of Support to Associations from Gambling Tax¹¹ have highlighted the problems and bottlenecks of state budget based funding of associations.

The Development Plan applies the principles of the Concept of Improving the Organisation for State Budget Funding of Citizens' Associations¹² approved by the Government of the Republic. For the implementation of the said programme, the Programme for Improving the Organisation of National Funding for Citizens' Associations has been developed (Measure 3, Activity 1 and various other Activities).

The Government finances associations through project grants, delegation of services and activity support¹³. In Estonia, the least common of these is activity support, which means supporting the activities and development of partner organisations that are important for public authorities and which requires a higher level of professional skills from the financing party and a deeper understanding of the activities and the role of citizens' associations. The implementation plan creates the preconditions for allocating activity support (Measure 3, Activities 1 and 2).

The diversity of available funding structures has created a need for closer regular cooperation between such structures (in which the Network of Estonian Non-profit Organisations took the first steps in 2010), in order to harmonise support terms and conditions, application and reporting forms and other practices applied and to ensure democratic decisions and transparency of activities (Measure 3, Activity 3).

The already implemented sources of financing aimed at increasing the operational capability of citizens' associations need to be continued and developed further – The National Foundation of Civil Society (Measure 2, Activity 5) and the local own initiative programme (Measure 2, Activity 6). Year by year, local governments have become more aware of the essence of civic initiative and the need to support it and many local governments have developed a special procedure for the purpose. The Ministry of the Interior needs to analyse that and disseminate the best practices and examples, in order to ensure their implementation in all the local governments (Measure 3, Activity 4).

Objective

State agencies and local governments support the activities of citizens' associations. Citizens' associations are sustainable and capable of operation and cooperation, and act as the initiators and implementers of social change.

⁹ Civil Society Research and Development Centre of Tallinn University, 2010: http://www.siseministeerium.ee/public/KUAK2010_institutsionaliseerumine.pdf

¹⁰ PRAXIS, 2008, http://www.siseministeerium.ee/public/K_RErahastamise_2006-2007_anal_siraport.pdf

¹¹ BDA Cosulting OÜ, 2008, http://www.siseministeerium.ee/public/BDA2008_hasartmangumaksu_mudel.pdf

¹² Concept for Improving the Organisation of State Budget Funding for Citizens' Associations, http://www.siseministeerium.ee/public/Rahkon_260309.pdf

¹³ It is also widely common for governments to support associations through the tax system, free or discount premises, training and other such offers, loans and loan guarantees etc.

Explanation

A strong civil society and operationally capable citizens' associations as parts thereof form an important prerequisite for the development of democracy. This means that citizens and the representatives of public authority and the business sector value the role of citizens' associations in the society. The structures of public authority can strengthen civil society by shaping a favourable legal environment, developing the services provided by the support structures supporting the activities of associations and improving the organisation of funding mechanisms. The legal framework establishes the specifications of citizens' associations based on the content of their objectives and activities. The state budget funded structures supporting the activities of associations will be further developed, training and development programmes, measures and grants will be implemented to ensure the sustainability and operational capability of citizens' associations and the promotion of cooperation to increase the participation of people in having their say in social matters, protecting the needs and interests of stakeholders and in providing public and community services and creating jobs.

Measure 1: Developing a legal environment supporting the operational capability and sustainability of citizens' associations

Legal acts stipulating the activities of citizens' associations will specify regulations, define more clearly the different roles of associations (e.g. acting in public interests). This will include the legal definition of volunteer activities, as well as the legal status of persons acting as volunteers, and legal mechanisms for volunteers to cover their expenses so that organisations can avoid an additional tax burden.

The problems citizens' associations have encountered in the course of performing economic activities and earning self-generating income will be analysed and the necessary guidance materials will be developed. Other things requiring analysis from the legal aspect include the developments of recent years, like the provision of public services by citizens' associations as well as associations engaged in social entrepreneurship or the provision of community services, charity and other such.

The role of the List of Non-profit Associations and Foundations Benefiting from Income Tax Incentives established by Government of the Republic Order No 94 of 8 February 2000 and the legal consequences of being included in the list will be specified.

In order to ensure the transparency of the third sector, measures will be implemented, under which national statistics and the information obtained through the annual reports submitted to the register of non-profit associations and foundations provide a correct and sufficiently extensive overview of the activities of non-profit associations and foundations.

Indicators for assessing the efficiency of the measure:

- sustainability of the Estonian non-profit sector (comprises seven sub-indicators);
- assessment of the impact of the implemented amendments to the law on citizens' associations.

Measure 2: Improving the quality, volume and availability of national support services provided to citizens' associations

An important factor facilitating the operational capability of citizens' associations is the availability and quality of support services, which include counselling, notification, training, training grants,

mentoring and development programmes, and the provision of these via IT solutions etc. In order to improve the availability and quality of support services, the state supports the mapping of the services provided to citizens' associations and the providers of such services, and the creation of a coordinated system. Cohesive counselling and information portals will be developed to concentrate necessary information about the establishment and everyday operation of citizens' associations, sample documents, information about training and funding possibilities and events all over Estonia, matters related to promoting volunteer activities, and other services. E-counselling of citizens' associations will be launched with the help of competent consultants and a database of frequently asked questions will be created.

This will also include the creation of bodies of information concerning area-specific training providers, associations operating in individual counties, providers of public services etc. Support services will be provided to citizens' associations under long-term contracts, which will improve the quality of the services and make them more systematic. Training and development programme for new and existing associations will be developed further and a system of further training for managers of citizens' associations will be created.

Indicators for assessing the efficiency of the measure:

- efficiency of the activities of national support structures for citizens' associations;
- satisfaction of citizens' associations with national support services and the providers of these services.

Measure 3: Improving the organisation of the financing of citizens' associations from state and local government budgets

In order to provide well-organised financing to citizens' associations acting in public interests, uniform funding practices and procedures will be used in the public sector, which will contribute to transparent, accessible and efficient financing that protects public interests. A programme for improving the organisation of state funding of citizens' associations will be implemented.

The funding of associations from the state budget is based on the needs arising from the implementation of national development plans. For that purpose, the resources aimed at improving the operational capability and sustainability of associations will be increased and partnership between the public sector and associations will be promoted. Criteria will be developed for advocate organisations, on the basis of which the ministries will allocate activity support for partners for participation and involvement of members (advocacy).

For allocating support to citizens' associations from the state budget, clearer and more uniform criteria (disclosure of information about activities, ethical conduct), transparent terms and conditions and procedures for awarding grants (processing of applications and the decision-making process in awarding grants) will be established.

In order to strengthen the operational capability and sustainability of citizens' associations and their umbrella organisations and networks and to implement innovative civic initiative based ideas, the needs and possibilities will be analysed and plans will be prepared to increase the state budget funding for the further development of the operating and cooperating capability of citizens' associations as well as for improving their ability to participate in social processes and competitiveness.

Local governments will be encouraged to develop and implement procedures and terms and conditions for funding citizens' associations.

Indicators for assessing the efficiency of the measure:

- well-organised system of funding citizens' associations from the state budget;
- proportion of citizens' associations receiving support from more than three sources of financing.

3. Citizens' associations as partners in providing public services

Background and problem description

The Government of the Republic has approved the concept prepared by the Ministry of the Interior – the Directions of Contractual Delegation of Public Services to Non-profit Associations¹⁴ - which forms the basis of the majority of the measures and activities presented in this chapter.

The contractual transfer of the provision of public services to citizens' associations is a rather common practice in local governments: that kind of cooperation is practiced by more than a half of the local governments (ca 60%), the residents of which make up approximately 87% of the population of Estonia. Local governments finance the activities of citizens' associations and the public services provided by associations in various ways, sometimes also without clearly defining the services in contracts and without acknowledging the provision of services in the framework of activity support (incl. free use of assets) or project grants.

The provision of public services is delegated to citizens' associations most commonly in the social, sports, culture and youth work areas, whereas 2/3 of these service providers are civic initiative based associations. The local governments who are cooperating with citizens' associations in providing services and have delegated the provision of public services to associations are generally satisfied with the work, rating highly the substantial quality of the services and the consideration of the needs of target groups. They also have great interest in transferring more services to citizens' associations, mainly in areas where services are currently already delegated and where the capabilities of the third sector are highly rated.

In addition to areas where they have more experience, local governments are also interested in transferring public services in areas where the capabilities of citizens' associations are not yet considered to be that strong: social services, hobby education, crime prevention and public maintenance. These assessments indicate the necessary development activities – in the former areas, guidelines and more systematic support materials would be needed and in the latter areas service descriptions should be prepared, service providers instructed and mutual cooperation developed. However, there are also obstacles affecting the ability of local governments and citizens' associations to ensure high-quality and purposeful services. Local governments feel uncertainty in fulfilling the requirements of legal acts and need clearer regulation. Less experienced heads of local governments interpret the relatively abstract delegation framework as a restriction to transferring services. For that purpose, the Development Plan includes plans to develop practical guidance materials (Measure 1, Activities 1, 2).

In addition, the Administrative Cooperation Act stipulates exceptions, under which non-profit associations with local government interest are not obliged to comply with the procedure stipulated in the Public Procurement Act when concluding administrative agreements. Thus, service providers are often not selected on the basis of their professional skills and service quality, but on the basis of ease of selection. The implementation of the Development Plan includes plans to analyse the relevant provision of the Administrative Cooperation Act and to present corresponding amendment proposals (Measure 1, Activities 1.2).

The practices so far in the conclusion, fulfilment and supervision of contracts for the provision of services have been diverse – different contract types have been used and the thoroughness of the

¹⁴ Concept: Directions of Contractual Delegation of Public Services to Non-profit Associations
http://www.siseministeerium.ee/public/Teenuste_deleerimise_kontseptsioon_FIN.pdf

contracts varies considerably. The assessment and supervision of results is generally limited to reviewing the reports and cost documents of service providers, the satisfaction of target groups with the services is assessed in very few cases and in nearly 1/3 of the cases no supervision of any kind is performed. The preparation of thorough contracts and the performance of substantial supervision would be significantly facilitated by guidance materials describing the process and results of delegating public services (Measure 1, Activity 1.1) as well as minimum service standards and service content descriptions (Measure 1, Activities 2 and 3).

The transfer of the provision of services and the implementation of other modern governance principles largely depend on the beliefs, knowledge and attitudes of the heads of local governments as well as on the awareness and willingness of citizens' associations. Delegation allows increasing the capabilities of local governments, but it requires their initiative and the creation of a favourable environment. Therefore, the specific requirements and needs of both parties will be taken into account in the preparation of delegation related training modules as well as in the provision of training and the development of a counselling system (Measure 2, Activities 1 and 2).

Citizens' associations do not cooperate sufficiently with each other in providing public services, although the synergy that would be created upon using each other's strengths carries considerable potential. New emerging cooperation, including with local governments, would be facilitated by the systematic concentration and availability of information about citizens' associations and the services they provide as well as by the organisation of area-specific seminars to disseminate the best practices and facilitate the establishment of mutual contacts (Measure 2, Activity 3).

Today, the development of long-term partnerships is obstructed by the currently common one-year contract period for the delegation of public services, which is too short to increase the stability and quality of services and reduce the administrative burden of local governments. The development and practical testing of delegation of services and the introduction of delegation as a form of cooperation would be facilitated by the implementation of pilot projects and the establishment of stable cooperation relationships would be facilitated by the conclusion of long-term contracts or framework agreements, which would allow partners to plan activities in a long-term perspective (Measure 2, Activity 5).

At the same time, the rather weak sustainability of citizens' associations in providing services poses a risk to both local governments and consumers of services, but local governments often tend not to take steps to improve the sustainability of partners important for them. In order to ensure sustainable partnerships in the provision of public services, it is therefore important to contribute to the development of the skills of citizens' associations also through ad hoc state funding (Measure 3, Activity 2).

Attention must also be paid to an important objective of delegation: the improvement of the availability and quality of services, and therefore more efforts must be made to ask regular feedback in order to determine the satisfaction of the end-users of services and to link the feedback to the assessment of the provision of services and to the improvement of service quality (Measure 4, Activity 1).

Objective

The provision of public services in cooperation between the public sector and non-profit associations is transparent, sustainable and in line with partnership principles, and citizens are satisfied with the services.

Explanation

State agencies and local governments recognise the role of citizens' associations in the provision of public services and in the development of the quality and availability of services. An increase in the delegation capability of state agencies and local governments and the development of the service provision skills of citizens' associations ensure sustainable cooperation in the provision of local services. The delegation of services to citizens' associations is harmonised, transparent and in line with partnership principles and uniform systematic bases are applied upon delegation.

Measure 1: Facilitating the delegation of public services to citizens' associations and harmonising delegation practices

The measure is aimed at developing the expertise and capability of local governments and citizens' associations in providing services at a higher quality and more efficiently as well as at harmonising the current practices used in delegating the provision of services. For that purpose, guidance materials addressing the different forms of cooperation and delegation will be prepared. The guidance materials will take into account the specific features of different types of citizens' associations and the related strengths and weaknesses in the delegation process.

In order to harmonise the content and quality of public services, minimum standards will be prepared for the more important services, on the basis of which institutions (including local governments) have to find optimum solutions for ensuring the required level. The standards are in turn supported by descriptions of the content of services prepared in cooperation between state agencies, local governments, direct service providers, consumers and area experts. These descriptions will cover both the recommended work process and the expected outcome, contributing more flexibly to the constant development of services and progress towards higher quality.

Indicators for assessing the efficiency of the measure:

- harmonisation of delegation practices: the number/proportion of local governments and state agencies, which have established a procedure for delegating public services;
- proportion of state agencies and local governments applying minimum standards and/or service content description in the provision of public services.

Measure 2: State and local government support to the contractual delegation of public services to citizens' associations and the development of the related capabilities

The development and implementation of a training module intended for the heads and officials of local governments and the representatives of citizens' associations plays an important role in increasing the capabilities of local governments and citizens' associations and in supporting their mutual partnership. In addition to the guidance materials described in the previous Measure, training activities will also address the different aspects of the role of citizens' associations and participation in the local governance context and the possibilities of encouraging that role, which would facilitate the purposeful development of citizens' associations as an extra resource of local development capability and help provide local governments with the skills to activate civic initiative and gradually improve the capabilities of the citizens' associations providing public services.

In order to increase awareness of delegation possibilities and ensure high-quality services at the local level, it is important to organise regular seminars under the leadership of ministries for introducing and disseminating the best practices and establishing contacts as well as to maintain

contacts in concrete areas of responsibility both with the service providers and the competent representatives of the target groups of services, in order to obtain information about the actual implementation of the policy, i.e. the success in reaching the target groups. In order to ensure continuous development, it is important to provide, with the assistance of county development centres, delegation related counselling to local governments and (potential) service providers.

In order to disseminate information, increase openness and develop more stable cooperation relationships, it is important to create a web environment for citizens' associations interested in providing public services and local governments interested in delegating public services, which would enable the parties to disseminate and find relevant information (guidance materials, samples, seminars, training events etc) and to bring together service providers and local governments.

In the event of a lack of long-term partners, the implementation of pilot projects would facilitate the development and practical testing of the delegation of services and the introduction of delegation as a form of cooperation. The conclusion of programme-based long-term framework contracts and the linking of these to development plans would help create and facilitate stable cooperation relationships between local governments and their long-term partners in the provision of services.

Indicators for assessing the efficiency of the measure:

- proportion of local governments delegating the provision of public services to non-profit associations by areas and across the size classes of local governments;
- assessment given by non-profit associations providing services to partnership with local governments. Satisfaction of local governments with non-profit associations providing services.

Measure 3: Facilitating and supporting the development of citizens' associations providing services

In order to motivate the continuous self-development of citizens' associations and to distinguish and recognise more expert service providers at the national or local level, a system for the recognition of citizens' associations will be created, based on accreditation, issuing of certificates of conformity, registration or issuing of uniform letters of recommendation by local governments, professional associations or state agencies.

The development of citizens' associations in specific areas would be facilitated by a more systematic use of ad hoc state funding with the prospect of state agencies and local governments being able to delegate more complex services, if necessary, and engage citizens' associations in area-specific development activities. In regards to state funding activities, ad hoc funding means focussing both on the general sector-specific competences and the development of service provision skills, as well as the purposeful and well-considered channelling of foreign aid resources into increasing service provision skills, particularly in respect of higher-risk or sensitive target groups.

Indicators for assessing the efficiency of the measure:

- number/proportion of citizens' associations providing public services;
- satisfaction of service users/clients with the services delegated to citizens' associations;
- satisfaction of local governments with the quality of the delegated services.

Measure 4: Taking into account the feedback received from citizens' associations organising the services and from service users

In order to ensure that the services provided meet the needs of the users in the best possible manner, mechanisms will be created to facilitate taking into account the experience of service providers and users in the further development of the services. Ensuring the high level of services in partnership between citizens' associations and the public sector requires more extensive focussing on obtaining constant feedback from service users, and taking that feedback into account both in the preparation of guidance materials and conducting training activities at the national level and the provision of services on everyday basis at the local level.

Indicators for assessing the efficiency of the measure:

- satisfaction of consumers of public services delegated to citizens' associations and frequency of asking feedback.

4. Involvement

Background and problem description

Involvement and participation of citizens is not a stand-alone area, but is closely related to the overall organisation of public administration, with the wider aim of ensuring the efficiency and transparency of state governance and consideration of public interests.

The development of involvement is integrally related to the capability of non-governmental partners to participate in the development of policies and the preparation of state-level decisions as well as with their leadership role in involving their members. The issues of how to strengthen the skills and possibilities of associations to have a say and represent their members are addressed in chapter Operational capability and sustainability of citizens' associations.

According to the assessment given by partners who have participated in policy development, citizens' associations increasingly sense their important role in finding the best solutions to problems faced by the society and, more specifically, in improving the quality of legal acts and policy documents and the preparation thereof. The Development Plan is based on the belief that the active interest of citizens and the citizens' associations representing them towards state affairs is welcome and the representatives of public authority can actively encourage it through involvement. The Development Plan also emphasises the need to motivate the participation of public sector employees as citizens in important debates and decision preparation processes.

So far, involvement activities in ministries have been carried out on the basis of unwritten rules and agreements. Feedback from both the officials and the involved partners shows that the current emphasis on soft measures (recommended good involvement practices, the introduction of these good practices through training and written guidance materials) has not established a sufficiently effective system. The efficient implementation of involvement requires clear legal and work organisation related basis, which would link involvement activities with the officials' regular work processes – the preparation of legal acts and area-specific development plans, establishment of plans, assessment of impacts, development of terms and conditions for financing measures etc. In determining the extent of involvement, the social weight of the prepared decision has to be considered – i.e. involvement is particularly needed in the case of policy documents of material impact. For that purpose, involvement should be linked to the assessment of impact both in the case of draft acts and development plans.

State agencies have to reach mutual agreements as to which documents regulating the state work processes need to be updated to include guidelines for the organisation of involvement (incl. rules of legislative drafting, requirements for preparing area-specific development plans, financing measures) (Measure 1, Activities 1 to 3). At the same time, the records of involvement activities so far have to be analysed both in the case of development plans and draft acts, where the relevant requirements have already been established, but are not properly complied with.

The organisation of involvement needs to be improved and instruction in the fulfilment of the requirements arising both from the law and good practices needs to be provided both at the county and local government levels, incl. in processing public plans and developing public services. The Development Plan foresees activities to support the work of the consultants of county development centres (Measure 1, Activity 5), who will then be able to provide counselling in the organisation of involvement at local governments.

It is important to ensure the traceability of decision-making and involvement as a work process. Until today, ministries have no obligation to disclose work plans (although several of them do that). Information concerning the draft acts and policy documents currently in preparation is scattered and difficult to find. That may also be the cause for the low usability of the current channels for monitoring legislation and policy decisions – the participatory web and e-law (*e-δigus*). Neither of these channels has as yet become the main source of information for the representatives of stakeholders. The participatory web rather publishes a random selection of draft acts – for instance, in 2009 public consultation was held in regards to 8% of the draft acts discussed at Government sessions. E-law covers the final stage of the process, which constitutes inter-ministry approvals and where it is too late for citizens' associations to intervene.

However, the public should have access to information about what decisions are currently being prepared and who and how participates in the preparation. This can be achieved through an information system of the processing of Government decisions – legal acts and policy documents – which would link the participatory web and e-law environments. This Development Plan foresees activities introducing the combined information system and providing instructions on its use (Measure 2, Activity 6).

Assessment of the substantial quality of involvement has shown that the evaluations given to involvement by partners and officials have become more similar. Nevertheless, there are no criteria for assessing the quality of involvement. Involvement methods therefore need to be reviewed and improved. In order to disseminate the best practices and know-how, training events will be organised for various target groups and counselling will be provided to officials in organising involvement. Guidelines for special cases of involvement will also be developed as necessary (Measure 2, Activity 1).

Until now, it is unclear who and how should solve cases of unsuccessful involvement or complete lack of involvement. The Development Plan contains a proposal to form an independent advisory committee, which comprises representatives both from the public sector and citizens' associations (Measure 2, Activity 5). Such a self-regulating body would be able to advise on and assess the efficiency of involvement processes and ensure that the expectation of the involving party and the participants are in balance. The role of the committee and its possible placement at an existing body will be analysed at the beginning of the implementation period of the Development Plan.

Citizens' awareness and motivation to participate in decision-making processes needs consistent development. The promotion of active citizenship is addressed in the Civil education chapter of the

Development Plan, while this chapter contains plans for targeted awareness-raising activities to introduce possibilities of participation, including through e-involvement channels.

Objective

The input of non-governmental parties is taken into account in developing public sector decisions and the parties are satisfied with the implementation of the involvement process.

Explanation

Involvement as the implementation of the principles of democracy and the actual ensuring of civil rights is a part of political culture. The quality of political culture is influenced by the development and strength of civil society. This Development Plan sees involvement as a practical tool for promoting good administration and participatory democracy.

Measure 1: Improving the organisation of involvement at the state and local government levels

In order to improve the application of good involvement practices, descriptions of work processes will be updated for the development of both legislation and other decisions (including area-specific development plans, financing measures, opinions etc). Clear guidelines will be established for officials to follow in their work processes. Involvement activities will be planned on the basis of annual work plans, complete with the allocation of the necessary resources (sufficient time, budget and responsible persons). On the basis of clear work procedures and plans the public will have a good overview of which decisions are currently being prepared and which stakeholders and citizens' associations are participating in the preparation. The organisation of involvement will be monitored regularly, analysing legislative and strategic planning documents. The bases for cooperation between ministries, county development centres and their partners will be established more clearly. Cooperation between institutions and sectors and joint development projects will be supported.

Indicators for assessing the efficiency of the measure:

- the organisation of involvement is linked to the work processes of institutions (work plans reflect involvement activities in major legislative decisions).

Measure 2: Developing involvement practices

Involvement methods will be updated and introduced on a wider basis. That will improve the quality of involvement processes; the best practices will receive recognition. Criteria for the assessment of quality will be developed. Functions for counselling and assessing involvement activities will be created or added to existing bodies.

Involving parties will be offered training and counselling as support in the planning and implementation of particular cases of involvement. Different target groups will be offered diverse possibilities of participation and citizens will be introduced channels, through which they can submit proposals to public authorities.

Indicators for assessing the efficiency of the measure:

- assessment given by citizens' associations to their impact in policy development;
- awareness of officials of the best involvement practices;

- increased awareness of associations and the population of e-participation possibilities.

5. Charity and philanthropy

Background and problem description

By estimation, 280 million EEK worth of cash donations are made and three billion EEK worth of volunteer work is done in Estonia every year. The role of charity is increasingly valued both in the appreciation of social capital and as a socio-economic contribution to the development of the country, which is worthy of consideration also as a part of our gross domestic product.

Donating

In countries with advanced donating culture, regular donations form a significant part of the income basis of citizens' associations and although the visibility of donating as a way of charity is relatively high in the Estonian society, mainly thanks to extensive campaigns on TV and in outdoor media, we still have a lot of room for development in the area of regular donations, not to even mention philanthropy. The popularity and reliability of the area of donating have in recent years been improved by various business sector initiatives, like Swedbank's donating environment, Foundation Dharma sub-funds etc.

In one year, nearly a half of the Estonian population aged 15-74 makes at least one donation (EMOR 2009); the number of donors has remained stable in the past three years and the economic crisis has not affected it. At the same time, there are less than ten charity-orientated organisations with an established trademark in Estonia, who allocate millions of Estonian kroons for donations. The proportion of donations is marginal in the income of the majority of citizens' associations and therefore the main challenge in the area is to develop the donating culture, in order to increase the share of donors in the society as well as the amount and regularity of their donations.

Nearly three quarters of the population have not shown any interest in or monitored the use of their donations, but at the same time the sense of assurance that donations have fulfilled their purpose has somewhat decreased (EMOR 2008). On one hand, the decrease of trust has been caused by donations-related scandals widely covered in the media (bankruptcy of organisations that have collected donations) and confusions resulting from unclear principles (the use of donations to purchase securities). On the other hand, the competition for the attention of donors has increased between citizens' associations, and they focus on emotion-based marketing activities instead of their former results and achieved impact. Therefore, the task here is to increase the interest of the public towards monitoring the use of donations as well as the contribution of citizens' associations into information disclosure activities, which together with transparency will result in an increase of trust and the more rapid development of donating culture.

This topic also includes the need to analyse the legal environment of donating, including gathering statistical data, which will be implemented in the framework of the chapter Operational capability and sustainability of citizens' associations. As important as the content and possible extension of incentives is to increase the awareness of potential donors of the current support provided by the taxation system to the promotion of donating culture and the more extensive use of incentives.

Volunteer activities

Volunteer activities are based on work done by people upon their own initiative, without receiving financial remuneration for it. Nonetheless, the organisation of volunteer activities requires resources and policies as well as strategies. The public sector, the third sector and the business

sector all have mutually complementing roles and possibilities in supporting and organising volunteer activities.

The survey Participation in Volunteer Activities in Estonia¹⁵ showed that in total, less than a half of the Estonian population has acted as a volunteer either independently or under the leadership of various organisations. At the same time, a large number of volunteers have not acknowledged themselves as volunteers. The majority or 78% of all the volunteers are the so-called passive volunteers, who take part in particular activities or undertakings on a one-time basis, but do not initiate activities. Thus, volunteer work is done in Estonia, but awareness of it and the commitment of participants are not very high.

The people's satisfaction with volunteering-related awareness and availability of information is high on the general level (e.g. the benefits of volunteer activities for Estonia and the public), but both volunteers and non-volunteers rate practical awareness as low (e.g. the areas, places and organisations where people can act as volunteers). Awareness-raising will be aimed at introducing the principles and possibilities of volunteer activities as well as at offering concrete activities and thereby recruiting new volunteers (Measure 3, Activities 3 and 4 and Measure 4, Activity 2).

The majority of people are of the opinion that volunteer activities are important and necessary from the viewpoint of the development of both the society and the individuals (78%), but fewer people find that the public authorities value volunteer work (38%). Therefore, more systematic work must be done at the state level to develop volunteer activities, publishing the progress and developments in the area and continuing the regular recognition of volunteer work (Measure 3, Activity 2 and Measure 4, Activity 1). Regular surveys concerning volunteer activities will be continued and organisations working with volunteers need separate attention. It is important to focus on their capabilities, experience and motivation as well as aspects needing external support (Measure 3, Activity 1).

Over the past five years, the involvement of volunteers in associations has grown considerably¹⁶. Motivating and retaining active volunteers is largely accomplished through increasing the capabilities of organisations, some of the activities necessary for which are addressed in the chapter Operational capability and sustainability of citizens' associations (e.g. legislation, training and mentoring programmes for associations).

The involvement of volunteers in the activities of citizens' associations is supported and promoted on the national and cross-sectoral basis mainly by the Ministry of the Interior and the Volunteer Activity Development Centre. In September 2010, five county centres coordinating volunteer activities were launched with support from the National Foundation of Civil Society and it is important to ensure their sustainability in cooperation between the Government, local governments and the leader organisations of the centres also after the end of the projects in May 2011. In addition, several ministries and citizens' associations coordinate volunteer activities in their areas.

2011 is the European Year of Volunteering, which in Estonia is coordinated by the Ministry of the Interior. The activities planned in the framework of the European Year of Volunteering are, above all, aimed at increasing the general awareness of volunteering, its values and possibilities to act as a volunteer as well as at strengthening the capability of associations to involve volunteers. Several

¹⁵ Participation in Volunteer Activities in Estonia, EMOR, Praxis, Kristina Mänd, Jon Ender <http://www.siseministeerium.ee/public/VTosalemine2009.pdf>

¹⁶ Report on the survey of the Civil Society Research and Development Centre of Tallinn University: Institutionalisation of Civic initiative in Estonia 2009/2010, http://www.siseministeerium.ee/public/KUAK2010_institutsionaliseerumine.pdf

activities initiated and launched in the framework of the European Year of Volunteering have been integrated as pilot projects in the implementation plan.

Objective

Donations are made in a well-considered manner, regularly and in increasing amounts. Volunteer activities are favoured, recognised and valued in the society and volunteers are efficiently involved and coordinated in the activities of citizens' associations.

Explanation

The positive impact of donations on the development of civil society will be increased by the well-considered nature (ensures effectiveness) and regularity (ensures stability) as well as transparency of use of donations (ensures efficiency). Improving the organisation of the legislative environment, including the extension or further development of tax incentives and informing the public about the incentives will help increase the popularity of donating among both private and legal persons. Improving the gathering of statistical data will help monitor the trends of donating culture more closely and assess the impact of legislative amendments more objectively. The development and implementation of good practices will increase the awareness of donors of the impact of their donations on the society as well as the transparency, efficiency and impact of citizens' associations in using the donations. Good practices will become standard procedure the faster the more donors demand compliance with good practices from the citizens' associations funded by them.

Volunteer activities play an important role in strengthening civil society and democracy, as well as a measurable economic value, which means economy of public resources. Volunteers participate in local and social development activities; volunteering creates social capital and cohesion, supports the development of people and has a positive effect on their health. As a result of efficient awareness-raising and valuing and recognising volunteer activities, new people will be introduced to volunteering, the proportion of active and long-term volunteers will grow and the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of volunteer activities will be increased.

Measure 1: Improving the organisation of the donating environment

The legislative environment encourages making donations to citizens' associations complying with good practices. The gathered statistical data will allow monitoring and analysing the trends in donating activities.

Indicators for assessing the efficiency of the measure:

- applicability and clarity of the legislative framework for donating;
- donating trend on the basis of the number of organisations declaring the receipt of donations.

Measure 2: Developing and disseminating good donating practices

In order to ensure the transparency and effectiveness of the use of donations, good practices for collecting and using donations will be developed for citizens' associations and donors. The parties financing the civil society (including public authorities) will contribute to the acknowledgement of the good practices, demanding the application of these practices from the citizens' associations they finance. Donors will choose the ones they support on the basis of how successfully the latter

comply with the principles of good practices. The regularity and total volume of donations will grow.

Indicators for assessing the efficiency of the measure:

- proportion of donators of the population;
- total volume of donations;
- number of citizens' associations complying with the good practices for collecting donations.

Measure 3: Supporting and promoting the involvement and coordination of volunteers in citizens' associations

The decisions related to supporting and promoting volunteer activities will be based on the information received from surveys and statistical data. The values, including financial values, created through volunteer activities will be assessed, which allows taking them into account as co-financing in projects. An improved basis will be created for citizens' associations to cover their expenses related to involving volunteers. Programmes aimed at state employees and companies will help citizens' associations to involve more volunteers, bring them into contact with providers of professional services and provide information about volunteering possibilities and the values created through volunteer activities.

Indicators for assessing the efficiency of the measure:

- proportion of people who have participated in volunteer activities arranged by organisations (passive volunteers / active volunteers);
- proportion of active volunteers of all the volunteers.

Measure 4: Raising awareness and popularity of volunteer activities. Information about possibilities of volunteering in citizens' associations is available

Recognition encourages and motivates people to start or continue volunteer activities and gives volunteers and the citizens' associations involving them feedback about the importance of their activities in the society. In disseminating information, emphasis is placed on the high value of volunteer activities, encouraging people to act as volunteers. People know why they engage in volunteering and where and how they can do it. In order to efficiently use the people who wish to act as volunteers, it is of primary importance to give them actual possibilities for volunteering, providing information about citizens' associations involving volunteers on an ongoing basis and mediating concrete advertisements for volunteer activities in citizens' associations.

Indicators for assessing the efficiency of the measure:

- amount, diversity and availability of information about possibilities of acting as a volunteer in non-profit associations (the monthly number of visitors to the Volunteer Gateway (*Vabatahtlike Värav*) site / the monthly number of active advertisements);
- clarity and availability of information about the social value and role of volunteer activities to citizens' associations, volunteers and supporters of volunteer activities.

6. Cost forecast

The implementation plan of the Development Plan contains an initial forecast of the cost of the activities. The forecast has been prepared in cooperation with the relevant ministries and is based on the costs of similar measures and activities in the practical implementation of the Development Plan for Supporting Civic initiative for 2007-2010. The detailed financing plan will be approved together with the annual state budget.

The implementation of the activities foreseen in the implementation plan of the Development Plan will be financed from the budgets of the ministries and the State Chancellery and from the European Social Fund (programme for supporting the county support structures for citizens' associations; programme for improving the organisation of state funding for citizens' associations) and from the Swiss Fund for Non-governmental Organisations.

The total cost of the Development Plan is ca 16.256 million EUR (Table 1), of which ca 3.493 million EUR is planned for the budget of 2011, ca 4.216 million EUR for 2012 and ca 8.547 million EUR for 2013-2014.

Table 1: Cost forecast of the Civil Society Development Plan 2011-2014

	2011 million EUR	2012 million EUR	2013-2014 million EUR
Ministry of the Interior budget	3.451	4.174	8.489
Local Government and Regional Administration Department resources	0.126	0.164	0.292
National Foundation of Civil Society	1.189	1.598	3.515
Local own initiative programme	1.157	1.157	2.314
ESF Rural Development Programme	0.633	0.699	1.504
ESF programme for improving the organisation of state funding for citizens' associations	0.055	0.051	
Swiss Fund for Non-governmental Organisations	0.285	0.505	0.864
European Commission's support for conducting the activities of the European Year of Volunteering	0.006		
State Chancellery budget	0.042	0.042	0.058
TOTAL	3.493	4.216	8.547

7. Implementation and coordination of the Development Plan

The coordination and implementation of the Civil Society Development Plan is the responsibility of the Ministry of the Interior. In addition, the activities of the Development Plan will be implemented by the State Chancellery and other ministries. The development and implementation of the civil

society policy is horizontal and therefore the success of the civil society policy largely depends on the ministries' willingness to define the inter-agency common interests and assume responsibility for the implementation of the cooperation policy. The Development Plan avoids duplicating the activities of individual parties. Besides state agencies, activities in the framework of the Development Plan will be implemented also by local government units, citizens' associations and the business sector.

The Ministry of the Interior will coordinate activities, initiate matters related to the supplementation and amendment of the Development Plan and monitor and assess the implementation of the Development Plan in accordance with the established objectives. During the process of preparation of the state fiscal strategy and the state budget, the involved ministries and institutions will inform the Ministry of the Interior of the activities supporting civic initiative planned in their area of government for the following period and budgetary year, which will give the Ministry of the Interior input for making specifications in the implementation plan.

After the approval of an area-specific development plan by an order of the Government of the Republic, a work group to direct the implementation of the development plan, and to provide feedback and monitor the implementation will be formed for the implementation of the Civil Society Development Plan. The work group for the implementation of the Civil Society Development Plan will be led by the head of civil society area of the Ministry of the Interior and the members include the representatives of the ministries responsible for the implementation of the measures and activities as well as the partners implementing the activities. The Civil Society Development Plan work group will report on the results of its work to the joint committee of the Government of the Republic and the representatives of citizens' associations. The main objective of the activities of that work group is to launch and develop a system for the preparation, implementation and assessment of implementation of the Estonian Civil Society Development Concept.

Other important parties in the implementation of the Development Plan are Enterprise Estonia and the National Foundation of Civil Society. The third sector consultants working in the network of county development centres coordinated by Enterprise Estonia offer free information and counselling services as well as training and development activities to citizens' associations in all the counties.

The objective of the National Foundation of Civil Society is to improve the capabilities of the Estonian citizens' associations acting in the interests of public interests in developing the civil society and in shaping an environment encouraging active citizenship through the financing of organisations, innovative ideas and activities.

The Development Plan as the Government's guideline document does not assign direct obligations on local governments, the business sector or the third sector, but it creates – through third party activities – a favourable environment and possibilities for the sustainable development of civil society and the entire third sector. As the majority of citizens' associations operate namely at the local level, the implementation plan of the Development Plan proposes various activities to help promote the cooperation between local governments and citizens' associations and increase the role and weight of the civil society.

The implementation plan of the Development Plan has been prepared for 2011-2014. In June 2013, the Ministry of the Interior will present to the Government of the Republic a report on the achievement of the objectives and efficiency of the measures established in the Development Plan

and the implementation plan in 2011-2012. For that purpose, the Ministry of the Interior will ask the opinion and assessment of the other ministries related to the Development Plan on the conformity of the activities implemented with the objectives established in the Development Plan.

By November 2012 at the latest, the Ministry of the Interior will present an updated implementation plan for 2013-2014 to the Government of the Republic.

8. Important terms and definitions used

Acting in public interests – acting in the name of common benefits, which are not used for private consumption, but are available to everyone, like nature, security, culture etc; or activities for the benefit of a more narrowly defined group, if that group is at a disadvantage compared to the rest of the society;

Public authorities – a system of state bodies exercising the power of the state in the territory of a country: legislative and enforcement authorities and bodies of law enforcement and maintenance of law and order;

Contractual transfer of public services – a situation where a public authority transfers the provision of public services to a citizens' association, maintaining control and responsibility for the provision of the services;

Advocacy (also the protection of interests) – the protection of the interests and values of the members of citizens' associations and other people included in the specific target group in communication with public authorities, the business sector and the public opinion;

Advocate organisation – a citizens' association performing the protection of interests; it can be a union of area-specific or regional organisations (umbrella organisation, network) or an association with private person members;

Philanthropy – knowingly planned systematic donating or volunteering in order to improve the welfare of other people;

Charity – generally involves one-time donations or volunteering in order to improve the welfare of other people;

Involvement – activity performed by public authorities with the aim to give the citizens or the associations representing them the possibility to participate in the preparation of decisions concerning them, including in the area of legislation;

Umbrella organisation – an association of legal persons acting in public interests based on area-specific or region-specific membership;

Citizen – every member of the society; includes citizens of other countries and persons without citizenship;

Citizens' association (also non-governmental association) – an organisation founded by private individuals (not public authorities or legal persons) for non-profit purposes (in the context of the Development Plan, mainly a non-profit association or foundation acting in public interests) or an association of such organisations.

Civil education – the skills, knowledge and values supporting a citizen's active and responsible participation in social life, contributing to the creation of the possibilities, will and competences necessary for that;

Community services – services provided by citizens' associations or companies operating in rural or city communities, aimed at local development and the creation of jobs, usually in a situation

where market regulation does not work. These services vary by area of activity, from entertainment to social services, management of joint communications, agricultural production, tourism etc;

Project grant – funding provided to citizens' associations for the (generally) one-time implementation of projects. Project grants are allocated on the basis of open application rounds;

Social entrepreneurship – as a rule, economic activities of citizens' associations with the objective to solve a social problem through entrepreneurship; companies may be partners to citizens' associations in social entrepreneurship;

Activity support – a method of financing citizens' associations from the state budget, with the aim to ensure the sustainability and management of the organisations important from the viewpoint of achieving the objectives established in the area; generally intended for covering overhead and salary expenses;

Support services – training, awareness-raising and counselling services offered to citizens' associations; provided in Estonia by, for instance, county development centres and sometimes by umbrella organisations to their members or in their networks;

Volunteer activities (also volunteering) – offering one's own time, energy or skills of one's own free will and without receiving financial remuneration. Volunteers help others or act mainly in public interests or for the benefit of the society. Helping the members of one's own family and donations of cash or objects are not considered as volunteer activities. Volunteer activities may be based on own initiative or independent, or participation in activities initiated and implemented by an organisation;

Government institutions – institutions financed from the state budget, the main task of which is to exercise the enforcement powers of the state; also includes the state agencies administrated by these government institutions.

9. Connections with other strategic documents and area-specific development plans

At the European Union level, the area of civil society is regulated by the following documents:

White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue¹⁷

Recommendations (2001) 19 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on participation of citizens in local public life¹⁸

Green Paper – The Future of Democracy in Europe¹⁹

A Compendium of Good Practice in Human Rights Education²⁰

Public Participation in Internet Governance²¹

Recommendations in local and regional democracy²²

Treatises in local and regional democracy²³

Legal Framework of Civil Society²⁴

A Strengthened Commitment to Equality between Men and Women: A Women's Charter²⁵

Of the national strategy documents, the Development Plan is, above all, linked to the following strategic documents and development plans:

Estonian Civil Society Development Concept (Resolution of the *Riigikogu* of 12 December 2002), pursuant to which the representatives of citizens' associations and public authorities base their work on the following principles and values: active citizenship, participation, respect, partnership, responsibility and accountability, political independence of civic initiatives, prevention of corruption, sustainable and balanced development and equal treatment.

Government Programme for 2007-2011, pursuant to which the government coalition deems the strengthening of the civil society to be of primary importance in the development of the country, considers citizens' associations its partners in advancing life in Estonia and holds an active dialogue with citizens' association operating at the state level. For demographic reasons, Estonia cannot afford increasing the state apparatus. The Estonian state has to become stronger not through the establishment of new institutions and the employment of new officials, but through involving citizens and citizens' associations in state governance and through a wider implementation of new technologies.

Strategy of Using National Structural Funds for 2007–2013, the administrative capability direction of activity of which also contributes to the development of citizens' associations.

Estonian Adult Education Development Plan for 2009-2013, the objective of which is to develop a system of life-long learning that would ensure diverse, alternative and supportive learning

¹⁷ <http://www.coe.ee/?arc=&op=body&LaID=1&id=129&art=646&setlang=est>

¹⁸ <http://assembly.coe.int/Main.asp?link=/Documents/WorkingDocs/Doc01/EDOC9265.htm>

¹⁹ http://www.coe.int/t/dgap/democracy/activities/key-texts/02_Green_Paper/

²⁰

http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/edc/1_What_is_EDC_HRE/general_announcement2_2oct09_en.asp#TopOfPage

²¹

http://www.coe.int/t/dgap/democracy/Activities/GGIS/Public_participation_internet_governance/Default_en.asp#TopOfPage

²² http://www.coe.int/t/dgap/localdemocracy/WCD/CS_Recommendations_en.asp#

²³ http://www.coe.int/t/dgap/localdemocracy/WCD/CS_Conventions_en.asp#

²⁴ http://www.coe.int/T/E/Legal_Affairs/Legal_co-operation/Civil_society

²⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/president/news/documents/pdf/20100305_1_en.pdf

possibilities for adults, which can be implemented in cooperation with various parties and which would improve the people's opportunities to obtain an education or qualification higher by at least one level.

Youth Work Strategy for 2006-2013 (Order No 380 of the Government of 7 July 2006) contains the bases for achieving the youth policy objectives and planning the relevant financing in cooperation between the state, the local governments and the third sector.

Anti-corruption Strategy for 2008-2012 (Order No 164 of the Government of 3 April 2008). In the third sector, the risk of corruption is primarily related to the relationships between non-profit associations and public authorities. There is a risk of corruption when the procedure established for the public duties transferred to non-profit associations is not clear and uniform. For instance, there is not enough information about relationships between local governments and local non-profit associations and the terms and condition on which local governments provide funding.

Estonian National Strategy of Sustainable Development 'Sustainable Estonia 21' (approved by the *Riigikogu* on 14 September 2005), one of the objectives of which is a cohesive society characterised by strong civil society taking part as an equal partner in the development of political decisions and the provisions of various (socially orientated) services.

Estonian Integration Plan for 2008-2013 (Order No 172 of the Government of 10 April 2008), pursuant to which integration is a process engaging the entire society, shaped by the activities of citizens' associations, local governments bodies and state agencies in the development of a favourable legal, economic, social and mental environment.

Ida-Virumaa Activity Plan 2010-2014 (Resolution of the cabinet meeting of the Government of 10 September 2010) is aimed at ensuring the development of civil society in Ida-Virumaa County, including taking into account the language-based aspects.

Updated **Estonian Information Society Development Plan 2013** (Order No 327 of the Government of 30 July 2009)

Developing a portal for citizens, entrepreneurs and officials and linking that portal to the necessary services: all the services created in the public sector are available to citizens via a citizens' portal. Expanding the possibilities of taking part in the decision-making processes of the state (eDemocracy)

National Health Plan 2009-2020 (Order No 325 of the Government of 17 July 2008), the priorities of which are based on solidarity among people, equal opportunities and justice, access to high-quality healthcare services and the empowerment of civil society. Healthy and socially active citizens are the basis for the development of a country.

Estonian Rural Development Plan 2007-2013 (Order No 81 of the Government of 12 February 2007), the objective of measure 3.2 of which (investment support for the renovation and development of villages) is, among other things, to improve the attractiveness and life quality of rural areas through increasing local activity and developing the non-profit sector.

The list is not exhaustive, as many other national strategy documents and development plans contribute, directly or indirectly, to the development of civil society.

